

## Editorial

*New Zealand Natural Sciences* began life as *Mauri Ora* in 1973, established by keen members of the University of Canterbury's Biological Society. Their aim was to provide an annual publication where undergraduate and graduate students could present original research in the biological sciences to the wider scientific community. The name, "mauri ora", was chosen because it signified the maori concept of the soul of Nature, paying tribute to the indigenous flora and fauna of our shores, streams, and forests.

In 1987, it was recognised that *Mauri Ora* could fill an empty niche in New Zealand scientific publishing by printing research papers covering all aspects of natural sciences relevant to New Zealand and Antarctica; including botany, geology, microbiology, molecular biology, soil sciences and zoology. The new name, *New Zealand Natural Sciences*, was adopted to highlight the new widened focus of the journal.

These days, many of our interactions with the wider scientific community are conducted online. With this in mind, 2007 saw the launch of the *New Zealand Natural Sciences* website ([www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/nzns](http://www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/nzns)). Currently the two most recent volumes are available online to subscribers, along with instructions for authors wishing to submit manuscripts. In addition, we are in the process of uploading the entire collection of papers right back to 1973 and hope to have this completed in early 2008. These papers will be freely available and will help to ensure that the research published within the journal over the past 35 years remains accessible.

This research has covered topics as diverse as the energetics of captive house mice (Winterbourn, Vol. 1: 147-155), the diet and distribution of blue duck (Craig, Vol. 2: 137-138; Fordyce, Vol. 4: 79-85), factors influencing the development of mayflies (Greenwood, Vol. 29: 55-66), the presence of icebergs off the New Zealand coast (Burrows, Vol. 30: 57-64) and antibiotic compounds found in New Zealand plants (Hickey et al., Vol. 17: 49-53). There have also been several special editions, including a supplement on the ecology of Kowhai Bush, Kaikoura, (Special Publication 2, 1979) and a tribute edition to celebrate the research achievements of Michael Winterbourn, one of the founding members of *Mauri Ora*, and his academic offspring (Vol. 31).

As a small journal, it has often been a struggle to get sufficient submissions, particularly in the competitive world of impact ratings and performance-based research funding. However, with the continued support of researchers, *New Zealand Natural Sciences* will remain an important vehicle for the publication of local scientific findings in the field of natural history.

**Amy Whitehead**

Editor